



3

INTRINSIC QUALITIES

Overview

Intrinsic qualities are the essence of a scenic byway. They are the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of a place. Intrinsic qualities are the resources that byway stakeholders seek to maintain, protect, enhance, interpret, and present to byway users for their education and enjoyment.

Scenic Quality is the heightened aesthetic experience derived from the view of natural and man-made elements of the visual environment along the byway corridor.

Natural Quality applies to features of the visual landscape and ecological systems that are in a relatively undisturbed state, including geological formations, landforms, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife.

Historic Quality encompasses legacies of the human past that are associated with physical elements of the landscape. Historic resources reflect the actions of people who lived in previous time periods.

Archaeological Quality involves characteristics of the scenic byway corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that can be inventoried and interpreted. The byway's ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence, have scientific value and educate visitors, while instilling an appreciation for the past.

Cultural Quality is evidence and expressions of the customs and traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural activities and features reflect a contemporary society, and may include gathering places, craft exhibits, festivals, special events, dance, music, food, and vernacular architecture. Cultural qualities of a byway

often highlight one or more significant communities and ethnic traditions.

Recreational Quality involves primarily outdoor recreational activities directly associated with the natural and cultural elements of the byway corridor. Both active and passive recreational activities are included.

Intrinsic qualities can have three levels of significance: "local", "regional" and "national." For the purpose of this document, a determination of level of significance for each resource is not made. Rather, each resource is described and evaluated on its own merit. This reinforces the goal of protecting resources for their inherent value, regardless of whether they are representative of local, regional or national characteristics.

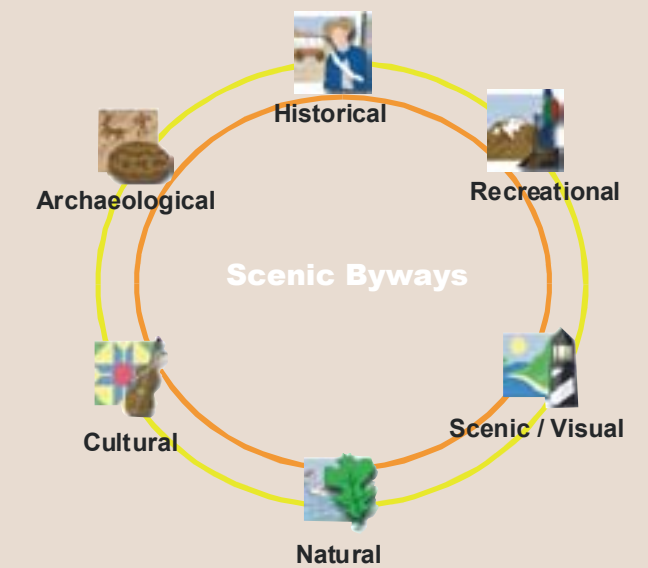
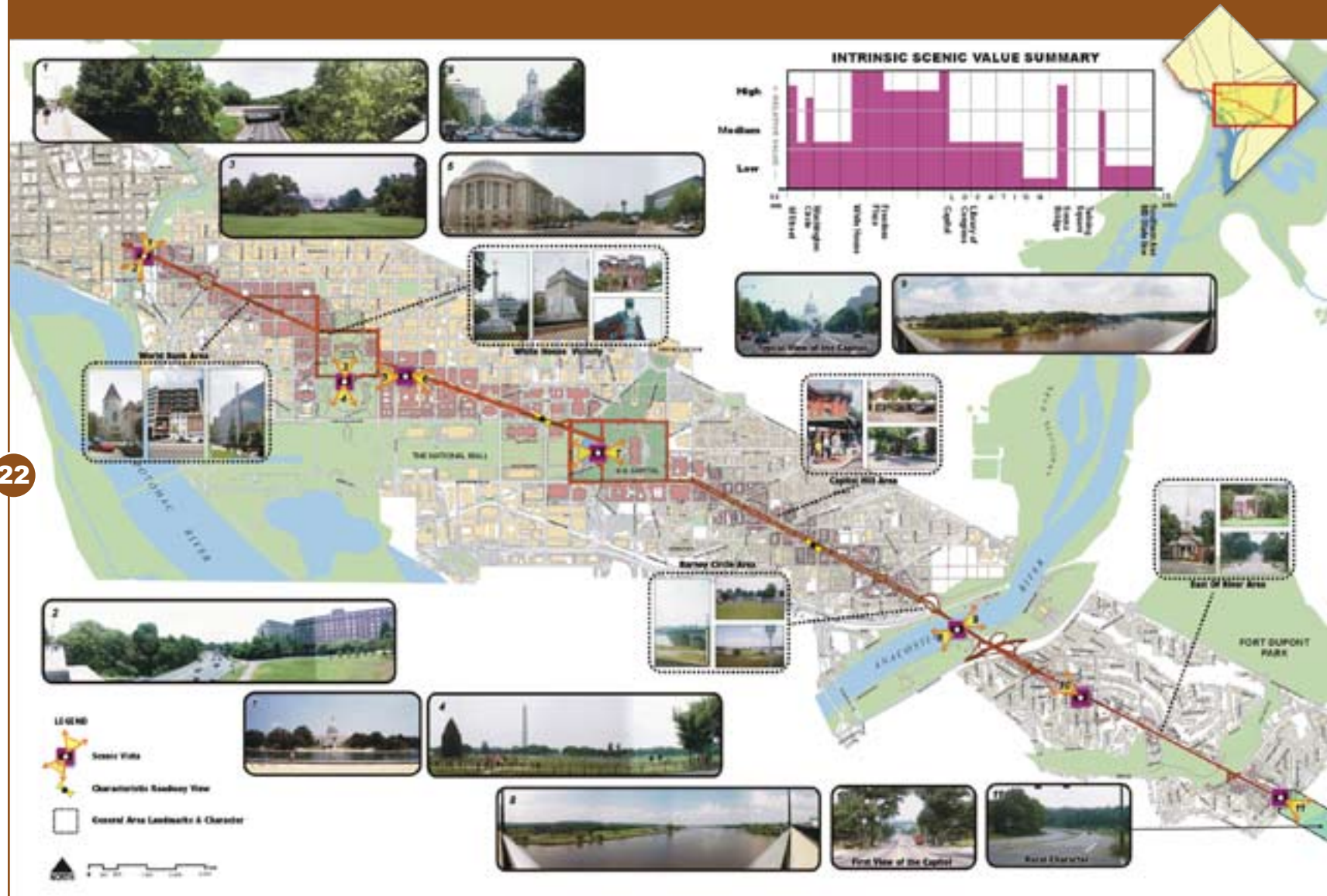


Fig.
3-1

INTRINSIC QUALITIES



Intrinsic Qualities Scenic Resource Assessment

Pennsylvania Avenue provides a cross section through the various “typical” landscapes of Washington, DC. This byway offers not only the familiar images commonly associated with Washington, DC, but also a rich variety of architectural elements, public open spaces, neighborhoods, streetscapes, and natural elements, which, together with their cultural and historical associations, provide for a different sort of stimulating visual experience.

The scenic qualities of Pennsylvania Avenue can be appreciated through a variety of media, viewpoints, and modes. The busy roadway view from an automobile, the random and ever-changing perspective of the pedestrian, and framed look-outs from strategic windows all contribute to the richness of scenic Pennsylvania Avenue. The classic “long lens” vista of the Capitol building in the background found in picture books and the view of the Presidential inaugural procession as seen on TV are well-known, but other scenes - Anacostia River as viewed from Sousa Bridge, the Washington Hotel with the Freedom Plaza fountain in the foreground, the Capitol building glimpsed from East of the River - these and countless more are part of the visual interest of Pennsylvania Avenue. At night, the lights of the city combine with illuminated federal buildings along the monumental core create nocturnal scenes that are unmistakably Pennsylvania Avenue.

In the West end, Pennsylvania Avenue offers some scenes unique to Washington, DC. Views of the Rock Creek Parkway from the Montgomery Meigs Bridge on Pennsylvania Avenue provide an awareness of nature, cutting through the urban fabric of the city. On the roadway itself, views of well-known buildings such as the World Bank, George Washington University Hospital, and preserved historic architecture against a backdrop of large modern institutional buildings comprise much of the scenic interest in this part of the corridor.

The area between the White House and the US Capitol offers views that are classic American images. Part of L'Enfant's 1791 design, the Capitol and White House are on a sight line via Pennsylvania Avenue - or they would be, if it were not for construction of the Treasury building.

Views along Pennsylvania Avenue in the Capitol Hill segment capture the distinctive character of this residential neighborhood. Scenes of the typical Capitol Hill rowhouses and the wide roadway and landscaped median exemplify the scenic character of this vibrant area. Looking west along this segment of the corridor, the Capitol building comes into view through street trees bordering the Avenue and in the median.

Panoramic vistas of the Anacostia River from the Sousa Bridge are a visual treat to travelers on Pennsylvania Avenue. Somewhat obscured from inside of an automobile, these expansive views are best seen by pedestrians or bicyclists crossing the bridge. The scenic quality of this segment is characterized by its quieter, residential character. Traveling east to west from the Maryland State line, the views transition from an almost rural character in Maryland to residential suburb within the City. Here, images of well-kept front lawns, impressive detached houses, and iconic church steeples influence the scenic quality. The tree-canopied roadway view is made interesting with the undulating topography. The highlight vista in this section of the corridor is the first glimpse of the Capitol building from the 29th Street SE intersection, where the sense of arrival into Washington, DC is clear.

Notable SCENIC RESOURCES at a Glance

View of Rock Creek Parkway

Views of the White House from E Street
and Pennsylvania Avenue

View of Navy Memorial from Pennsylvania
Avenue at the National Archives

View of The Capitol from Freedom
Plaza

View of the Capitol from 2nd Street, NW

Views of the Anacostia River from
Sousa Bridge

First view of Capitol as approaching
from East of the River

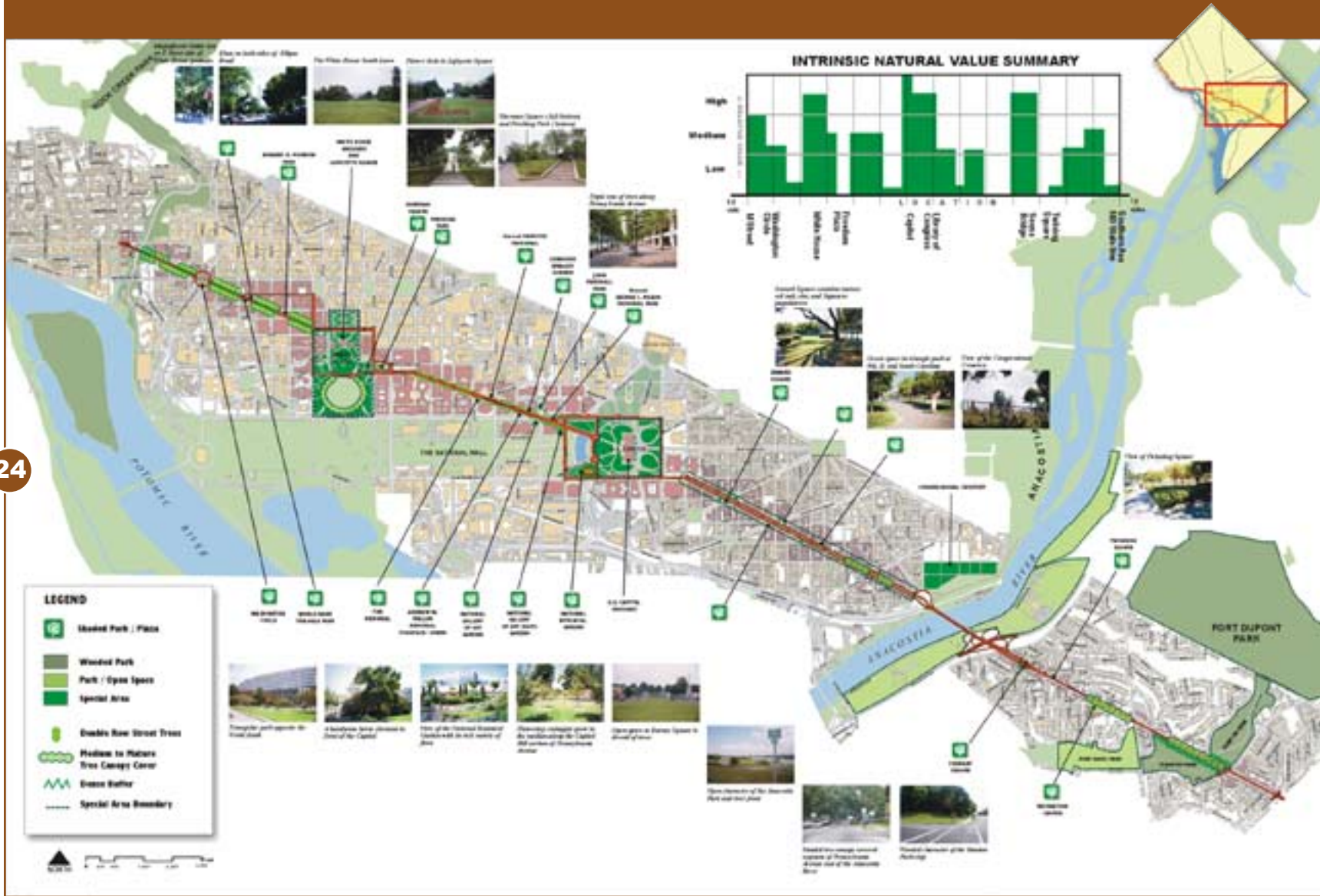


Fig. 3-3

NATURAL INTRINSIC RESOURCES

Intrinsic Qualities Natural Resource Assessment

Washington, DC has been known as the “City of Trees.” President Jefferson encouraged new tree planting in the District by sketching out the first Washington street tree planting on record: a plan to plant Lombardy poplars along Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol Building and the White House. Under the brief leadership of Alexander R. Shepherd, the second governor of the District of Columbia, maples, oaks, poplars, lindens, sycamores, elms, ashes, and many other trees were planted throughout the city. Early in the 20th century, the McMillan Commission selected the American elm to line the National Mall. Other noteworthy events include the planting of Japanese cherry trees around the newly created Tidal Basin in 1912, and the creation of a National Arboretum in 1927.

The natural values of the Pennsylvania Avenue byway corridor are especially appreciated within the context of an urban environment. The natural features of the corridor consist of small, triangular-shaped parks created through L’Enfant’s 1791 design, other pocket parks and circles that provide welcome refuge within the urban landscape, rows of street trees, and parks and natural areas where second-growth forests have grown back under the protection of the District of Columbia and the US National Park Service.

Along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor are some unique resources, not found anywhere else in the Nation or the world. The White House grounds has trees, shrubs, and flower gardens that have been planted by Presidents and First Ladies of the United States. The grounds of the US Capitol and Library of Congress boast thousands of trees and shrubs from four continents. In addition, the US Botanic Garden and the National Arboretum are located on or near Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Pennsylvania Avenue corridor also provides connections to Rock Creek Park, the Anacostia River, and several historic Fort Circle parks that provide substantial forested areas within the city. Other parks and green spaces in the West End include the World Bank Triangle Park and the Edward R. Murrow Park. Parks and green spaces within the Monumental Core include Sherman Square, the FDR Memorial, the General Hancock Memorial, the Canadian Embassy garden, John Marshall Park, General George C. Meade Memorial Park, and the National Gallery of Art gardens. Not all of the many triangle parks and green spaces near 18th Street SE, 19th Street SE, and H Street SE are named, but feature interesting species, such as thornless honeylocust and oriental plane trees. Green spaces east of the river include L’Enfant Square, Twining Square.

Along much of Pennsylvania Avenue, street trees enhance the visual streetscape and provide shade for pedestrians. One of the most popular and handsome street trees in the District, the scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*), is the official tree of the District of Columbia. Other common street trees between Washington Circle and 17th Street NW include red oak and willow oak. Particularly notable in the Monumental Core are the double or triple rows of willow oaks that canopy the sidewalks leading toward, and enhancing the view of, the Capitol building. The small flowering crabapple trees planted along the median strip in the Capitol Hill segment from Eastern Market to Barney Circle are occasionally interrupted by larger red oaks. Farther east on Pennsylvania Avenue, particularly in the vicinity of Potomac Avenue, medium-sized to mature street trees form a partial canopy over the roadway and sidewalks. East of the river, Pennsylvania Avenue becomes lined with a variety of hardwood trees along the street and in the front yards of homes, forming a partial to nearly closed canopy over much of the Avenue.

Notable NATURAL RESOURCES at a Glance

- Lafayette Park
- The White House Lawns
- The Ellipse
- The US Capitol Lawns
- The US Botanic Garden
- Congressional Cemetery
- Barney Circle
- Anacostia River
- Anacostia Park
- Seward Square
- Twining Square
- Fort Davis Park
- Fort Dupont Park